The Commonweal

April 20, 1951

A EUROPEAN HEARS WARNING BELLS

Meditation in Grand Central

JOSEPH CZAPSKI

PLAGUE ON BOTH HOUSES?

The Notion of Neutralism

ROBERT BARRAT

Monk and Hunters

THOMAS MERTON

Volume LIV **15c** *Number 2*

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"Measuring Up" to a Saint

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

In the Public Interest

IN MARCH 1945, a few days before the death of President Roosevelt, Robert Sherwood returned to this country from the Pacific theatre of operations where he had made an inspection tour for the President, having been especially instructed to get General MacArthur's views on our future Pacific policy. When Sherwood, who said he was "enormously impressed" with the range of MacArthur's views on the Orient, made his report to Roosevelt, the President remarked: "I wish that he [MacArthur] would sometimes tell some of these things to *me*." So deeply suspicious of the Democratic Administration were MacArthur and his staff, that Sherwood said he found the unmistakable signs of "a persecution complex at work" in the MacArthur entourage.

In recent months General MacArthur chose to impose his private views on his Commander in Chief by means of a message to a veterans' convention, an unauthorized message and implied challenge to the Chinese commander in Korea, and a letter to the minority leader of the House. All told, one can only judge these actions to have been the behavior pattern of a man who put himself above the laws of courtesy and country.

MacArthur's opinion on Pacific policy—which is, that Asia is the decisive battlefield to be defended against the Communists and that therefore we should extend and not limit the Korean war—is an opinion totally in opposition to American foreign policy; in holding this opinion, MacArthur was defying the judgment of the President, the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Eisenhower, the majority of the United Nations and the majority of the Congress. One may, if he is an admirer of the General's, believe that the General was acting in a democratic manner, in deference to the will of the majority and in the best interests of the principle we fight for, the principle of the "democratic way of life." But the burden of the proof is on him. This, it seems to us, was the behavior of a man in defiance of the majority, a man with a will-to-power that was contemptuous of the prevailing reason of the majority; this, in short, was the behavior of the self-appointed genius who always thinks he knows what is best for the ignorant masses and whose actions are in the pattern of history's long chronicle of dictators.

Maybe MacArthur was right; maybe he was one of those rare and enlightened leaders destined to show mankind the way. Certainly he had reason to be restive, since he had been in a most difficult military position ever since the United Nations was forced to defend itself on the distant and disadvantageous Korean peninsula.

But in our judgment MacArthur was disastrously wrong and we are of the opinion that the mystique of his enlightened leadership was a cult too jealously guarded by a selected group of admirers to be genuine. We consider MacArthur's policy to have been wrong for the following reasons:

First, we believe that in order to wage war now against the West, the Soviets must have the steel-making capacity of the Ruhr, or Japan, or both. Therefore Western policy should be to prohibit Russia from the Ruhr and Japan by building up a defensive position in the free world with all haste, in the hope of stalemating the threat of a world war.

Second, we believe that in order to give us time to build these defenses, every effort should be made to limit the Korean war to Korea, because to bomb Manchuria means to bomb the rest of China eventually, and this in turn means that Russia will be forced to come to the direct aid of Mao Tse-tung. Since the United States cannot hope to defeat the Communists through non-atomic air power alone (we could not destroy the North Korean army with air power, nor can we destroy the Chinese armies now, even though we have had absolute control of the air), we would, then, following MacArthur's strategy,

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have to send our armies into the futile and bloody trap of a land war in Asia. Were this to happen, Russia would have accomplished her desire to spread and thin out our non-atomic air and land forces around the world to a point of such over-extension that it is doubtful whether Western arms could be supreme in any one theatre of war.

Third, since it is possible that under such circumstances the great powers will resort to atomic warfare (especially if the rumored atomic artillery shells are a reality), we believe that it is the moral obligation of Christians first to exhaust every possible means of averting this unspeakable massacre, and one of those means right now is to limit the war to Korea, making every effort to discharge our moral obligation to defend the United Nations there without provoking further conflict.

Fourth, we believe that the present foreign policy of the Administration is essentially correct in its European emphasis and in its combined objective of defense and negotiation. This policy is by far a better hope for an honorable peace than the swaggering belligerency of MacArthur.

In his last attempts to dictate the Far Eastern foreign policy of this country and of the United Nations, General MacArthur clearly exceeded his authority and, in defying the normal processes of the democratic code, he placed himself outside the cause and the ideology we are trying to defend; he in fact brought on his own dismissal. Surely the President acted with sincere regret, as he has said. But certainly his decision was for the common good; it was, we believe, the only decision he could have taken in the interests of discharging his responsibility to the country and to all those throughout the world who look to us now for a reasonable example of leadership.

• NEXT WEEK •

CAROL H. WEISS reviews *The Nice American*, the story of a young colonel stationed in Algiers in 1945.

Colonel Childress serves as a symbol for the well-meaning American liberal and he is torn by his attraction for two women, themselves symbols, respectively of "civilized Europe" and "adolescent America." Mrs. Weiss finds that this narrative derives its greatest interest from the author's "perceptive comments on American foreign policy," which she quotes.

In a very real sense Mr. Truman could only afford to make this decision trusting in the ability of his countrymen to weigh the facts impartially; if the MacArthur partisans choose to attack Mr. Truman as wildly as we anticipate they will, then we believe that those who support the President in this matter have every good reason to stand by him now and thus vindicate the high trust he has placed in them.

And Rumors of Wars

FOR months visitors have been quick to note the contrast in atmosphere between Europe and America as far as consciousness of war goes. On the Continent, where the threat is a matter of a comparatively few miles, people have appeared much more concerned about other things. Necessarily they have been more intent on providing for their day-to-day existence than anything else.

This spring, the proverbial season for new political adventures, Europeans are more forcibly concentrating than ever on their daily personal exigencies. Rearmament is taking a new toll in civilian goods in Britain; the Attlee government has warned of even greater austerities just as restiveness over the pitiful meat ration reaches a new pitch. In France transportation workers have won increases in their wretched pay, and the French people are confronted with higher fares, increased rates for coal, gas and electricity and higher taxes—a new inflation spiral that means poorer living for most. West Germans have been told that they must cut foreign imports, for their ECA credits are running out.

In this country austerities are few. The debate about defending Europe is settled here more than it is in Europe, as Robert Barrat explains elsewhere in this issue. The danger here is that the American people will believe that victory is in sight despite very little change-over from "business as usual." Again, a contrast with Europe comes to mind. We are the more volatile, prone to oscillate with greatest speed between extremes of pessimism and hopefulness. At the moment we are buoyed up by the slow but steady march of UN troops in Korea and by a renewed sense of our productive strength. Europeans are kept sober by their knowledge of the world, their memories and ruins of the past war, the harshness of daily existence and the nearness of the Russian threat.

Everyone has been trying to find out why

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Speaker Rayburn has been warning the nation in such ominous tones. No one has hit on an adequate explanation in movements of enemy troops. Even the buildup for the big assault from North Korea is not reported to be out of the ordinary. Checks at other danger points in Europe and the East have proved no more revealing.

There was, however, the MacArthur desire to carry the fight to the Chinese mainland and greatly extend the war in Asia. And then the Soviets themselves may be eager to expand the Korean fighting. What would follow, for instance, the introduction of squadrons of Russian pilots, submarines and Mongolian troops into the battle?

But even if we succeed in steering our way successfully through narrow channels and past all these Eastern shoals, we shall not even then be able to sit back. Secretary Marshall says that the very best the nation can hope for now is "ten years of tension." And there are such cogent factors as this: one year from now the USSR is expected to be at peak effectiveness militarily with some chance that even the satellites will have been welded into an imposing military force. But a year from now our lead in atomic weapons will have dwindled and our other defenses will not yet be completed.

How then explain American optimism and the let-down observable in Washington and the country over? Our chance of preventing the war depends primarily on the defenses we are able to erect in conjunction with our European and other allies. We are lamentably behind as of now; we cannot afford to lag further. A national state of emergency does exist; just now we are passing through its most crucial stages. The fact that most Americans do not seem to realize the precarious nature of our defense timetable would serve as one convincing reason for Speaker Rayburn's expressed concern. For in actuality the prospect we all face is a hard one, at best.

Did They Attack the Root?

OF ALL the factors that have contributed to the plight of the itinerant farm worker in the United States, the chief is the iron law of economics. As the dominant form of cultivation shifted from the small, diversified, family-type farm to the many-acred factory-in-the-field specializing in one or two big cash crops, things became highly seasonal. There were months on end when no hired hands were needed. Where the crop was perishable, the temporary nature of the employment offered was extreme: many hands were needed for exceedingly brief periods.

In order to eke out an existence these homeless workers had to keep on the move—from one crop and one state to another, with a good chance of ending up the year without enough to subsist on. Mostly unorganized, these migratory workers got low wages even when they were working; they were forced to compete on the labor market in true laissez-faire terms with foreign workers.

The living quarters on the many of these food ranches are often ramshackle, if most of them are preferable to the flimsy shacks which house these workers in off seasons. With no fixed place of abode, their children are deprived of schooling. America's neglect of her migratory farm workers has long been a national disgrace.

The trouble is that no one accepts responsibility in the matter. The grower claims that it is no concern of his what these families do when not in his employ. The consumer who breakfasts on foodstuffs from the far corners of the hemisphere does not see what he can do about it. Local and state relief authorities tend to feel that the problem is beyond their resources.

In view of all this it is interesting to see what the President's Commission of Migratory Labor would do after nine months of intensive study. It places some reliance on concerted efforts of employers to guarantee minimum conditions to foreign and domestic labor: it counts on certain benefits to workers from the pooling and coordinating of growers' labor needs.

The Commission believes that heretofore the attack on this problem by local, state and federal government agencies has been too piecemeal. It therefore recommends the creation of some agency which would coordinate—but not supplant—the migratory labor activities of existing government agencies. The report places much emphasis on proper arrangements for importation of out-of-state and foreign farm workers. It calls for state and federal minimum wage legislation—with new laws on housing and public health. It requests the inclusion of these and other farm workers in our social security system. It recommends more stringent child labor laws.

All this if brought to pass would give these workers a certain status which they now lack: it should also improve their living conditions somewhat. But how much of this legislation can be expected considering the strength of the American farm bloc? And if all these changes were effected, how good a life would the itinerant farm worker have even then?

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Fat Boys

AT LEAST 77 newspapers have carried or are carrying Elmer Wheeler's cheery *The Fat Boy's Book* in regular installments. More than 100,000 copies of the book have been sold. And this is only part of the story. The hep magazines are publishing rival reducing diets, and almost everywhere you can hear knowing talk about calories and chemical reactions, proteins and the dangers of too much salt. The diet-for-males fad is in full swing.

This time Elmer has done a bang-up job of selling the steak itself (very high protein), with due regard, of course, for the sizzle. The fat boy is on the way out. Elmer has spread the good word.

"It could only happen here." Where else in the world do people eat too much anymore? A British family, the man on the radio said yesterday, is now limited to one pound of meat a week. In India, millions are threatened with famine. All over the Orient, in South America, in Spain, here and there throughout Europe, the diet craze in the United States would be a bitter joke to hungry people, if they knew about it. "Eat all you want and still reduce," the ads promise. "Your friends will be amazed!"

What is it to be hungry? What is it to be well fed in the presence of those who are hungry? Many Americans know. During the war, wherever the GI's went, there were always the hungry kids hanging around, watching every morsel a man put in his mouth. "Hey, Joe, you want my sister? You want to go home with me?" The sisters were hungry too, and the mothers and fathers. Everybody hungry but Joe, who had his own special hungers.

What is it to be fed when the people around you are hungry? It's hell if you're right there, the little kids looking up at you from sunken eyes and the older ones overly wise to the profitable shady deal.

Thomas Aquinas taught that no man had a right to superfluities while others were deprived of necessities. Left in those icy terms, the ieda might forever remain a proposition found in a theological tract. But when you can see eager faces looking into your own, can reach right out and touch the hungry, it becomes a principle that burns with human meaning. You know then in your guts that St. Thomas wrote the truth.

Are there any fat missionaries any more? When you send the priest in India a few dollars, he writes back and tells you how it's a long time since he's enjoyed a meal. He feels a greater guilt with every swallow.

Any GI, anyone who has traveled around Europe (in the out-of-the-way places, not the tourist headquarters), anyone who has ever had anything to do with a breadline can understand why the priest feels that way.

I remember Naples. This was more than three years after the war ended, but things hadn't changed very much since the time described in *The Gallery,* that moving, compassionate novel about wartime conditions there.

After midnight you'd find skinny little Neapolitan kids slumped in doorways, their hands outstretched even in sleep. And the *Galleria* was still a busy center, two years ago, for pimps and petty chiselers, exploiting the hunger of families still living in the skeletal ruins of bombed-out buildings or holed-up in caves outside the city. I remember the tough-guy older kids, busy on the streets at three in the morning, kids used to hunger and homelessness, ready to make a deal for you on the black market, their English vocabulary fouled with the four-letter obscenities of absent GI's now solid and respectable in ten thousand stateside suburban homes. These kids were ready for anything. Tomorrow one had to eat. Tonight there were rich Americans abroad.

Hunger hardens. The pitiful little waif with sweet expression and dowager-melting eyes is strictly a poster creation. The kid who knows what hunger is catches on quick to the wages of sin. The homeless kids I talked to in Italy, wandering in packs like hungry wolves over the countryside, were tough, shrewd, wise beyond their years, ready for anything. They grew up on the streets, learned to fear bombs before they knew what thunder was, never remembered a time when they didn't have to plot and plan for the next meal. They were bitter young; they never had any illusions to lose.

There are Americans too who know what it is to be hungry, but they are generally in out-of-the-way places, unnoticed in the bustling activity of the city.

If you stay too close to Fifth Avenue, you forget about the Bowery. It's only a few blocks from the Boul Mich to West Madison Street, yet the streets are worlds apart.

Outside St. Francis Church in Manhattan, every morning, the men line up and a brown-robed friar gives them bread. They are silent, but a few of them look as if they might actually be grateful; others accept it with unchanged expression, as they would any bitterness. It's all done out on the open street. If you happen to be passing, you find yourself casting your eyes down, as if in prayer, ashamed of every extra pound. Outside the Catholic Worker houses throughout the country men line up, as they have for 18 years, and wait for coffee and bread in the morning. At the store-front missions of the nation's skid rows, every night men and women sit through dreary religious services, mumble hymns and confess the Lord Jesus, for bread.

Bread, bread. All over the world the cry for bread.

When you can hear the cry ringing in your ears and see the wasted faces and the bony bodies before your eyes, that is one thing. When famine and starvation are merely words in a newspaper heading, recalling distant places and distant brethren, but not very vividly or insistently, that is something else again. It is easy then to turn the page, unmoved. It is easy then to enjoy every meal as if there were no hunger in the world, as if everyone sat down three times a day before a full board.

That is what has happened to us here in the United States. That explains Elmer Wheeler's latest crusade.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Meditation in Grand Central

In the U. S., a European discovers, everyone knows there's room for everybody.

By JOSEPH CZAPSKI

LAST May I was scheduled as guest-speaker for the National Polish Union in Chicago, to speak on the Katyn affair. I prepared reluctantly to leave New York.

I saunter through the station, sublimely unconscious of what my feet are doing. Long passageways, stairways, lights on all sides of me, light falling from above, the flood of the crowd in movement. Suddenly at the entrance to the concourse my reverie is shattered by a clap of thunder—the immense swelling of an organ, the singing of a powerful choir. Bach? Where is this organ? It sounds as if it were playing about two inches from my right ear. Have I entered a cathedral instead of a railway station? But I am immediately reassured by the advertisement of a giant coffee-pot. A rose-tinted, very real-looking hand tilts the pot, coffee flows into the cup, and the steam escapes in spurts from the spout.

People hurry in all directions. I am hard put to find a single poorly dressed man in the crowd, a single person stumbling along with a dilapidated valise, a squashed basket or a bundle tied together with bits of rope. On all sides of me go neatly dressed human beings with contentment written on their faces.

★

I CANNOT help thinking of the waiting room at Kuybishev, USSR, during the war. An enormous room it was, the floor entirely strewn with a mass of humanity in rags, half dead from cold and hunger. It would be hard to describe the filth, the dead odor of those bodies. In the greenish half-light the portraits of Lenin and of Stalin stretched along the entire length of the wall, right to the ceiling. The sound of music rose in sonorous waves, broadcast by an impressive-looking loud-speaker. Only at Kuybishev they were playing Strauss waltzes instead of Bach.

It isn't the material contrast which today calls forth these reflections but the fact of finding here, in an American station, the illustration of all the ideals about which they speak and write endlessly over there: the ideal of *bien-être* within the reach of the masses, an ideal represented over there as essentially sovietic, a phantom food fed to the starving crowds at the same time that millions are sent to die in the camps because they do not serve with sufficient self-abnegation an ideal they would have attained a long time ago were it not for the "blood-thirsty" Americans and the other capitalistic countries.

It is not simply a question of prosperity become accessible to millions of individuals. As I look at these American faces, gay and well-fed, as I stare at the bright-colored advertisements, I repeat to myself the meaningless slogans we were forced to recite in Russia every day: "It is better to live," we had to say, while we huddled together in cold ranks, "we live like civilized men." What strikes me here is the politeness of everybody for everybody. Each man seems to be his own boss; there is plenty of shoving and pushing, but it is gentle pushing; all know at heart that there's room for everybody.

★

OBVIOUSLY I am describing only the surface of things. It is enough to read any of several books written by Americans about America or to see a play like *The Death of a Salesman* in order to view America under the most sombre of colors. However, this surface has an enormous importance in itself, being the mode of living adopted by millions of people. I realize that underneath a variety of well-tailored clothes the human heart remains unchanged, grief is often predominant, passion goes unsatisfied or suppressed, despair, despite the fact that one forces oneself so intently to hide it, takes over.

But I cannot help believing the expression of well-being on men's faces, the organized, peaceful rhythm of everyday life is indeed existence at a level to which all men aspire; not the mode of living of a few thousand privileged souls, but of millions of Americans. And the pattern is not a pattern typical only of railroad stations; it has penetrated everywhere.

Very often inside American churches I have thought of Simone Weil. "The man whose entire family has perished in unspeakable torture, who has himself been tortured inside concentra-

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JOSEPH CZAPSKI is a Polish painter. He was one of the 79 Polish officer-prisoners to escape Starobielsk Camp before the murders of the Katyn forest.

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tion camps—like the young Indian of the sixteenth century whose tribe had been completely exterminated—if he once believed in Divine Pity, either believes in it no longer or else conceives it from that time in entirely different terms. I have not undergone such trials, but I know that such trials exist, a knowledge which, in the last analysis, amounts almost to the same thing. I must therefore conceive of Divine Pity under such a light as can never fade but remains invariable whatever may be the blows which fate reserves for me: pity which can be transmitted to every human being, whoever and whatever he may be."

★

SUDDENLY, in the midst of Grand Central Station, surrounded by the thunder of Bach and the good-humored crowd, I feel myself completely alone. What are we doing here, we the "persistent Poles," a scattered race, powerless, ridiculous, with our Warsaws, our Katyns; we who cannot forget how we lost our country and over six millions of our citizens? Must we, then, learn American formulas, learn as quickly as possible to smile, and, if we cannot forget, at least hide in the depth of our being what has importance for us, in order, that is, not to annoy, not to shock the public with a face that cannot wear amiable smiles or the manifest accoutrements of dignity? Alas, we have not lost our hypersensitivity, our strange gestures, those small habits which must appear in the new world as part of a bad education.

After all, perhaps not. Perhaps, on the contrary, our obligation is to cry out as loudly as we can how all that is only a superficial sort of victory and desperately vulnerable; how, without a way of thinking broad enough to envelop the whole earth, without an ardent imagination and compassion for all miseries spread throughout the world, here, too, catastrophe menaces. Perhaps we emigrants in spite of—and because of—the burden of the past which we drag along with us and from which we do not wish to separate ourselves, are more aware, more vigilant than our neighbors. Rare are those among us who would wish to trade that knowledge for the most American brand of happiness.

Who knows but our role is exactly that: to make America aware that it too might one day know a fate like ours?

The tocsin struck first in Korea, where thousands of the "first citizens of the USA," young and healthy, died without knowing very well why they were being sent to fight so far from home. Perhaps the thousands of alarm clocks, the warning bells that stories told by emigrants add up to can help in some way to clarify the situation.

It would be the utmost hypocrisy to pretend the sort of constant harmony between an easy conscience and its ally, the sense of well-being prevalent in America, are specifically and uniquely American. In the early days of Christianity a saint complained that the Christians were "decorating their books with precious stones while on the threshold of their houses Christ lay agonizing."

Did not nineteenth-century Europe contain entire social strata bulging with every imaginable luxury? As always, it was only the exceptional few who bore within themselves the real flame of compassion, while philanthropy continued to be, in the main, a method of self-glorification.

The monument erected on the square of Sèvres-Babylon, opposite the large department store called *Bon Marché,* always seems to me the apotheosis of the relations between rich and poor at this period. The wife of the founder of the store, a woman rich and eminently philanthropic, swathed in marble furs, leans forward condescendingly from the top of several marble steps towards an urchin clad in rags (also of marble). If today things in Europe move at a different pace, it is scarcely because "the burning bush of compassion" flourishes there more fully than in America. It is because even the richest and the stupidest European feels himself in danger, because Europe has been impoverished, because she has lost the conviction that she is the world's mistress; because the Soviet frontiers grow nearer and nearer.

★

FROM the moment of departure I look about me intently. The train passes above Harlem and other quarters far from the center of the city. The ugliness of these streets teeming with humanity, covered with dirty papers and rags, is almost unbearable. The most modern buildings are clustered about the subway stations, constructions of a lamentable mediocrity which remind me strangely of the houses crowded besides the narrow railways in the suburbs of Warsaw before 1914.

Yet one is irresistibly attracted by these millions of windows, by the faces behind them. Every conceivable shade of skin, shape of skull, variety of expression is represented, expressions that range from the most strangely subtle to the most obtuse or savage.

In looking at all this with the eyes of a painter, it comes to me that to discover the beauty of this new world (Wilde's affirmation that the painter creates what is beautiful in nature seems no longer a paradox but a truism) is an undertaking which can and must be attempted; not in searching for picturesqueness but in studying with absolute precision, with humility, sometimes with anger, these streets, these millions of rails, these

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tons of scrap-iron, this sterile earth, these piles of excrement which burn in the twilight and from which clouds of smoke rise into the spring air.

As I look at these faces, these men seized by and harnessed to almost superhuman labors, I read in them—despite their smile, the formulas of graciousness—that isolating and terrible idea which dominates them: to earn money, to excel their neighbor, to raise their standard of living or at least to maintain themselves on the vertical ladder suspended above the abyss. How many times in addressing a passerby have I not had the impression that my question was tearing him away from meditation?

One really sees a people and their countryside not from the windows of a railway car but only after many years of having lived in the land, of having loved and understood a few of the human beings who balance themselves on the universal, vertical ladder. Only such a critical glance can, without masking or falsifying the truth, bring out the real beauty of these streets. It was thus that Utrillo found means to evoke the poetry that lay hidden among the hovels on the outskirts of Paris. Likewise Toulouse-Lautrec created out of the sidewalks and cheap dance halls of Montmartre, its brothels and painted whores, an art profoundly, nobly human. His glance learned how to charge itself with more compassion and understanding than one would find in entire tomes written by sure-eyed moralists.

One must, as Durer wrote, study a subject a long while in order to create a *new* work.

★

HARDLY ten minutes have passed before we begin to find ourselves outside the city limits. Houses become rarer. More and more trees. Another few minutes and we are traveling along the Hudson River.

The two banks of the great river, beside mountains, are covered with verdure, with handsome, delicately-toned trees; everywhere there rise villas, from the most luxurious to the most modest, but all alike, maintained with infinite care. We steam by a little ancient-looking station with stairways and a glassed-in foot bridge overhead. This is where Toscanini lives. In what way can this spring-like world be less seductive than the region around Lake Leman? Twenty minutes also from Grand Central Station and I find myself already transported into the most peaceable of Switzerlands! On the blue of the Hudson I count the small boats floating at ease.

Perhaps there is, precisely at this moment, in one of them an American Krasinski (one of Poland's greatest romantic poets) together with his American Delphine. To them it seems:

That reality changes itself slowly
Into a dream of crystal and of silver.

FROM FRANCE

The Notion of Neutralism

THE neutralist idea is making great headway in France and throughout Western Europe. Americans should have the courage to recognize the fact or they will suffer bitter disillusionment.

It was almost a year ago that I called attention in these pages to the fact that with an intellectual élite this idea was becoming "more and more influential." Today a thousand signs indicate that the concept of a Western Europe which is neutralized, both militarily and diplomatically, is gaining wide popular support. I speak not only of France. In England the Peace With China Movement, organized in the large cities, has recently met with great success. In Italy the neutralist stand of the Nenni Socialists has made deep penetrations with the working class and contributed to creating uneasiness in the Communist Party and to the Magnani-Cucchi crisis. In Germany 70 per cent of those polled rejected rearmament and there is widespread demand for a neutralization of Germany guaranteed by the East and the West.

In France itself the circulation of *l'Observateur,* the political weekly of Claude Bourdet, every issue of which has one or more articles defending and illustrating the neutralist thesis, is rising fast. Reviews such as *Temps Moderne, Esprit* and the daily, *Le Monde,* which are very influential in forming opinion, have just carried articles favoring European neutrality. The Communists themselves, although in principle hostile to the idea of neutralism, are persuading the progressists and the *Combattants de la Paix* to take an interest in the movement.

Moreover, even the very adversaries of the idea, by attacking it often and violently, only succeed in giving it publicity. As for politicians who feel compelled each Sunday to expose "the neutralist illusion," they give impetus to the idea by adding at the same time that they favor an independent France and an autonomous Europe. Which proves that either they do not know what words mean or that they are in favor of the idea—although they refuse the label.

All this goes to show that the neutralist idea has spread out from intellectual circles and tends to seize hold more and more of the consciousness of the masses. This substantiates the prophecy of *l'Observateur* at the end of last year: "We believe that this idea, born in 1949 and developed in 1950, may well be the focus for all debates in 1951."

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LET me present the happenings and facts which have helped this idea, to which the peoples of the West are naturally so averse, to take root in the popular mind.

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I must distinguish carefully the motives which act on various strata of the population.

I know personally a certain number of men of good-will, some of them Christians, who from the morning after the American victory refused to be caught in the false dilemma: Soviet bloc or American bloc. I want to make clear that there is no anti-Americanism of a more or less consciously Communist origin in their attitude. They remember that twice the United States has come to the rescue. The French people acknowledges the financial sacrifice required of each American citizen to make the Marshall Plan possible. They know that if the United States were not around, Communism would long have been master of the world. There is no question that if my compatriots had to choose tomorrow between the actual conditions of existence in America and those in Russia, nine-tenths of them would not hesitate an instant in choosing the American way of life because of its greater freedom.

But that is not exactly the question. It is rather that what they know of American civilization does not impel most of my compatriots to desire a type of society built on the American model. It would require pages and pages to explain with all the necessary nuances the reservations which Europeans have in regard to the United States.

Very, very roughly it can be summed up this way: they fear the predominance of big business, the free play enjoyed by capitalism and technocracy, the absence of a genuine social democracy, the standardization of life, a certain pharisaism which assumes a mantle of virtue and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and nevertheless oppresses the Negro and brandishes the atom bomb as the *ultima ratio* of law and civilization.

All that disturbs them as to the future of American civilization. And instead of either the socialism of the Soviet type backed by machine guns or the civilization of the robot and the dollar which the United States is preparing for them, they prefer to create an order of society which reconciles both the thirst for liberty and devotion to social progress, a truly human order.

★

DESPITE ITS purely theoretical appearance, this attitude has immediate repercussions in the domain of foreign policy. It consists in not wanting automatically to link the destiny of France with that of the United States in the development of international affairs. And this attitude of the intelligentsia has found a counterpart, a year later, in popular opinion, as a result of events in Korea and what they have revealed of American policy.

When the North Koreans crossed the 38th Parallel Europe was (except for the Communists) indignant to a man and its first reaction was to applaud the American troops who tried to throw back the invader. Then there was a second reaction: "After all, the regime installed by the UN—that is to say, by the USA—in South Korea was no good. Would it not be better to let the Koreans fight it out among themselves?"

And then the war began. We beheld the American defense stiffen in the Pusan redoubt. MacArthur pulled off a splendid series of surprise landings. We hoped that, since the North Koreans had been severely checked, peace parleys would begin and the Calvary of the Koreans would soon be over. But we saw the American troops cross the 38th Parallel and advance toward the Manchurian border. And we began to fear that imprudent moves by general headquarters in Tokyo would make war with China inevitable.

Are we right or wrong about this? Reading the communiques we get the impression that things are happening as if the viceroy of the Far East, General MacArthur, has been seeking, and is still seeking, a chance to provoke China or to put her in an impossible position by a move to launch herself on a mad mobilization and armament race which would permit the United States to retaliate.

A strange thing that has been much discussed in the Western press is that of the offensive of the UN troops of November 24, when the diplomats at Lake Success were making every effort to find a peaceful solution of the Korean war through the creation of a demilitarized buffer zone. It was this very day, when the Chinese delegation was expected at Lake Success, that the Commander in Chief of the UN forces chose to come up to the banks of the Yalu River, seemingly in order to confront the diplomats with a *fait accompli*.

No less discussed and no less mysterious is the failure of that offensive. The impression here still is that General MacArthur wanted to provoke intervention in force by the Chinese and to create a more or less artificial Pearl Harbor which would deliver a psychological shock to Congress, to the UN and throughout the United States. A most curious fact, and one most frequently discussed, was that never after the first of December was there observed on the Korean front, the "formidable" Chinese Army which communiqués complacently spoke of in terms of "overwhelming numerical superiority."

The UN troops crossed the 38th Parallel in the opposite direction, evacuated Seoul, fought a retiring action, but most of them without firing their guns. Was the North Korean Army, then, a phantom army? How everything would become clear if it were admitted that Tokyo headquarters needed this "formidable" enemy offensive in order to bomb the Chinese bases in Manchuria and carry the war to Chinese territory!

Happily we have thus far been spared this eventuality which would unquestionably have brought about open warfare between China and the United States, and very likely have led to a third world war. But we also have the impression in Europe that after this near-disaster in Korea the American Government gave up the idea of seeking a political solution for the Korean problem and persuaded the United Nations to condemn China as an aggressor.

In our anxiety we cannot refrain from asking whether the United States has therefore become deeply convinced of the inevitability of war with Russia. Does America then coldly envisage the possibility of a preventive war?

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Just as we cried, go slow, when in 1945 in the enthusiasm of victory America demobilized her troops and abandoned half of Europe to the Soviet giant, we are now ready to cry out in the same voice to the American people, who manifest so many signs of being caught up in an intense war psychosis, abandoning themselves to the demons of fear and anger.

Most Europeans still believe that World War III can be avoided. There is no fatality about history. The will of man can always arrest the course of events. Everything indicates that Russia does not want war now because she is unable to support it. Russia does want the fruits of war, but she does not want war. To those who say "Let us profit from the momentary inferiority of the Russians in atomic weapons" we reply: "Are you willing, then, to atomize the Russian people?"

Contrary to what the Russians claim, time is not automatically on their side. It would, in fact, work against them if the camp of the democracies had a policy which is both firm and flexible: it would leave the door open for negotiations each time negotiation is possible; it would prevent the USSR from embarking on new conquests, but *by suppressing the reasons which give Soviet Communism its expansive force, that is the poverty, social injustice and unemployment in every country not yet occupied by the Russians.* We do not have the impression that this is the policy which the United States seeks to carry out; that is why the neutralist idea makes so much headway.

★

INSTEAD of the policy which the Americans propose to us today, which implies a mad armament race, suppression of the claims of social justice, revival of German nationalism and immediate rearmament of Germany, war inevitably tomorrow and occupation by the Red Army the day after, the neutralists paint another picture which easily exerts a stronger, more widespread appeal. It consists in setting up a neutral Western federation which would refuse to be identified either diplomatically or militarily with one bloc or the other. Such a federation of neutrals would be able to intervene actively between the two blocs and cast its weight in accordance with the interests of peace and justice.

The neutrality of this federation would have little in common with the neutrality of Switzerland, for example. It would imply, instead, effective participation in the machinery of collective security and a serious effort to provide military defense for the West.

The only difference, but it is a capital one, is that in a war between America and the Soviets the Russians would have no obvious strategic interest in invading a neutral West which was morally and militarily capable of resistance. The majority of Frenchmen, Italians, Belgians, Germans, etc., who would fight badly or not at all if they believed they were being dragooned against their will into a war launched by Wall Street financiers or international cartels, would fight to the death, as they did in the Resistance, if the Russians invaded their countries despite their declaration of neutrality.

One of the immediate advantages of a neutralist policy would likewise be to put the Communists in an untenable position. It would be impossible for them to arouse the working class—whom they continue to manipulate now—against a national policy of rearmament if they could no longer say that it was aimed *a priori* at Russia.

A neutralist policy would have for us in France the immense advantage of ending a situation which leads us to the abyss: the war in Indo-China. It is clear that all support for this war in France is passive. It is costing us billions of francs and thousands of human lives. It also severely impairs our prestige. One does not have to be a genius to guess that the pursuit of the war against Viet-Minh, as part of the battle against Communism in Asia, is a *quid pro quo,* exacted by the American Government for its financial and economic aid to France. Solely from the French point of view we have no interest whatever in carrying on this scandalous war which is completely unpopular in France. The first move of a truly free French Government would be to bring the war to an end, to extinguish one of the most dangerous conflagrations now smoldering in the world.

To conclude, let me add that European neutralism would provide the only possible solution for the unhappy problem of German rearmament, which the Atlantic policy is about to bring upon us as surely as two and two make four. If there is one point on which we believe the Russians will never give way it is indeed that of re-creating a Wehrmacht clearly directed against them. And if there is one idea that disheartens all Europeans who are democrats and friends of freedom it is to imagine that tomorrow Corporal Otto, former war criminal, will be fighting at the side of Sergeant Benoit, formerly of the Free French, against Popov, former hero of Orel or Stalingrad. It may well be imagined the success Communist propaganda would have with a prospect like that.

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BUT I shall go on no further about the advantages of a neutralist policy. It also has its dangers and its risks, as those who support it admit. Every consequence of a policy cannot be foreseen. All that it is important to see now is that a policy of unlimited rearmament, and of the hardening of two opposing blocs, involves still greater dangers and considerably less guarantees.

The neutralist choice has nothing exciting about it, I acknowledge. "How can the country of Jeanne d'Arc and Napoleon be neutral?" a good man said to me indignantly. But if this policy is the one now chosen by many good minds it is because the other choices are even less inspiring.

Europeans become neutralists only because the United States seems at present incapable of enlisting them in a policy which they find coherent, generous and constructive. It depends on America whether Europe will reject its neutralist temptations.

ROBERT BARRAT

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Portraits of the Artist

I HAVE NEVER been convinced that Sinclair Lewis had any artistic importance. This might be a criticism of me, rather than of him; but it struck me that he was a sloppy technician and a bad writer. Nothing he has ever done has changed that judgment. But he did as well as he could what he had to do, though he did it broadly and did it angrily rather than acidly. He was a sincere and honest man who loved America deeply and abidingly. If he was never able to evoke from me respect for him as an artist, respect for his humanity and his obvious integrity has never been absent.

His integrity was never clearer than in the difficulty with which he worked, in the long, slow, painful climb he made to fame. He wrote many things, stories and novels, before he managed to say to Americans what he wanted so much to say. If he knew despair in those early days it was a secret which he kept with dignity. If he knew unhappiness in his later life, and if the chill of loneliness stopped his heart for moments, as it has great power to do, he made no public moan. No one heard him lament in the heard silences of the menacing night. If, in the heated day, the grasshopper was a burden and desire failed and the golden bowl was broken, he did not speak of these things. He had a decent respect for reticence. I think that what he gave to himself he deserves from others.

★

BUT only yet a little time dead, the essence of his human weakness is now revealed by a man who does not know how to write. "As told to Helen Camp" is part—the nakedly revealing part—of a by-line of one Alexander Manson to whom Sinclair Lewis gave a job. The unrespectful essay is called "The Last Days of Sinclair Lewis." and it is photographically accompanied in the *Saturday Evening Post.*

It has always seemed to me that a man ought to have enough arrogance to write his own script. I would as soon let somebody write my material as I would eat potash or wear your suit. To be infirm in any way is a pity, humbling to the healthy, and reminding them of their unmerited fortune. Not to be able to write is, perhaps, a luckless thing. But it is a lack which can be kept hidden with grace A young girl's beauty may be marred during the period she is wearing braces on her recalcitrant teeth; but there is no special need for her always to smile. But, for money, to outrage pride by admitting your poverty of talent in "as told to's," seems to me as tasteless an addiction to commerce as if one persisted in being an inferior chorine.

In any event I cling stubbornly to the proposition that whether I know or not that Shelley once walked naked through a room, Wordsworth had an illegitimate child, Swinburne got drunk and Coleridge took opium, nothing is added to the Skylark, Tintern Abbey, "let dead men rise up never," or the Ancient Mariner. What is clear to me is that the artist has produced a body of work which delights me. That he was scrofulous seems none of my business. All else, except the work, is ghoulishness. Writers for the *Saturday Evening Post,* makers of Ph.D's, seem to me bodysnatchers like Jerry Cruncher or early, non-murderous, Burke and O'Hare. Shakespeare is, thus, the luckiest artist who ever lived.

Indeed some of the knowledge gained to us by these breathers over the dead can be artistically destructive. A fifteen-year-old girl told me last week that it was evident from the Ancient Mariner that Coleridge took drugs. Asked by me for proof she recited the lines:

> The many men, so beautiful!
> And they all dead did lie:
> And a thousand thousand, slimy things
> Lived on; and so did I.

I asked her if it were possible that the poet could have written the lines if, like Hazlitt, he drank tea. Her agreement was reluctant and weak—like Frank Costello's answers. Without more subtlety about it, I told her that her English teacher was an idiot. Unhappily this was a judgment in which I had been anticipated. If I have any grandchildren, I hope I'm not around when some high-school teacher introduces them to Hemingway, with textual notes out of some future Frederic Wertham or Katherine Horney.

Mr. Manson was the last confidential secretary of Sinclair Lewis. Whatever the nature of the contract about confidences, it no longer binds. "When I got back from France," Mr. Manson told Miss Camp, "I found him in a state of alcoholic exhaustion. I told him bluntly that unless he agreed not to touch spirits I couldn't go on working for him." It was probably charitable and kind of Mr. Manson to talk like this to Sinclair Lewis. It would have been kinder, still, not to have talked about it to Miss Camp, and, thus, to me.

What right have I to this knowledge of the last days and habits of an American novelist? What is added to my appreciation of *Arrowsmith* or of *World So Wide*? Does the character of Sam Dodsworth—glimpsed again in the last novel—become deeper or richer for me? This manual stirring of the ashes in the urn—by it is decency observed, Lewis meaningfully restored, lustre breathed again into the pages of his books? Where can the dead hide whose little, living habits stand, one by petty and pathetic one, nailed by a spike, like an English traitor's head?

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IT WAS THE proud boast of the Greeks that the dead be pridefully buried, that the privacy of the remaining and spiritless flesh be clothed with the deserv-

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ing reticence of earth; and Iphegenia bravely rebelled against the tyrant Creon for his unfeeling disregard of this last and natural tribute of respect.

But Mr. Manson tells us about Lewis' vitamin deficiency, his favorite eating places in Florence, his "solar eczema," the lancings that made his face "a mass of scars." Lewis had a "tremor of the hands," liked America, called Mr. Manson's wife "Little Monkey."

We are told further that Lewis called Mr. Manson and his wife "his children." But the figures of two selfless and devoted people are quickly sketched in as we learn that "he was actually our 'child.' "

It is stated that Lewis was a lonely man "very affectionate himself, and very much in need of affection." His relations with his former wives begot judgments. A guess is made about his feeling for his living son: "I think he was equally fond of Michael." His loneliness is used to account for generosity on the ground that he was "sensitive to loneliness in others." Once when Lewis gave $150 to a man, Mr. Manson protested and was told to mind his own business. It was an injunction to which he remains immune.

That Lewis taped the tip of one of his fingers before typing, wanted a room with a view on which he turned his back while working, never used things properly—these are some of the bits of unrelated things used to fill out our image of an author at work. "If he had a big desk with an armchair, he would never sit at it properly, but would perch on a corner of the desk and scribble notes." That is one of the clearer sentences used to touch up the feeble portrait.

★

WHAT a man thinks is of consequence. The images of life, the images of himself he carries about with him have meaning. For much of art is autobiographical. Whether or not it is great art is tested only by the power of the artist to conscript from what he remembers new meaning; so to bring it out of itself that it ceases merely to be his, but to be something in which we participate because it has been transfigured into universal spiritual property.

Thus I do not need ever to have had children to bear the unbearable burden of Lear's sorrows. For this, one of the reasons may be that the having of children is part of my natural aspiration, part of universal aspiration—one that is realized for most of us. And I am aware, in my early manhood, that my children may defeat me, and that they may turn my life into a contractual obligation wholly defined by them.

Because I have been shaken with the fever of love—or because such malaria of the mind is dreamed of willingly by me—I am one to whom Juliet is speaking. She speaks to my revivified memory, or to my hope. She speaks to the disease that once conquered my blood, or that I desire to govern and reign in my blood.

Whether her creator or Lear's used a quill or a hundred of them, drank sack until he fell under the table, was quarrelsome, lacked vitamins, owed the butcher, or walked in the rain, is of no more consequence to me than the price of eggs in 1600. That Bacon died because he caught cold from fooling with fowl in the snow has utterly no relation to the essay on Love. It does not matter that I have ever learned it.

How differently than this does Mr. Robert Sherwood deal with Philip Barry. In order to do what he calls "carpentry" on Barry's unfinished "Second Threshold," he read all of that late playwright's notes.

He tells us that Barry lost his only daughter in infancy. But Mr. Sherwood does not tell us this in order to gossip, or to prove the closeness of his relationship. He tells us because, to him, it remained a pertinent and abiding fact in Barry's mind. "I believe," Mr. Sherwood writes, "that in Phil's fanciful imagination this daughter lived and grew, and one may see his concept of her in girls that he wrote, especially Tracy Lord and Miranda Bolton."

Mr. Sherwood quotes from a speech of the father, in "The Philadelphia Story": "I suppose that the best mainstay a man can have as he gets along in years is a daughter—the right kind of daughter . . . one who loves him blindly—as no good wife ever should, of course—one for whom he can do no wrong."

No skeletons, here, have fallen out of any closets. The fact of a man's life has, by himself, been related to his work. Light streams over lines which before were dark. And we comprehend them better for this light.

But it is not alone because one artist is viewing the work of another that this illumination comes. It is, also, that one man of character is writing about another. What Mr. Sherwood has suppressed is unimportant—and for that reason has been kept back. Reticence has flowed out of the quality of his mind. He has told us what we have a right and need to know. Gossip about the living or the dead is a meretricious and a tawdry thing. Criticism comes out of a deeper and a different kind of quarry altogether.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

An Appeal

IN ACKNOWLEDGING a response to the appeal which THE COMMONWEAL published in its March 30 issue, Father P. Caironi, S.J., Cherukunnu P.O., North Malabar, India, tells us what he can accomplish with American dollars. "Your help will enable me to buy rice for the weaker orphans and to send to the hospital many sick (it costs me 10 or 15 cents to send a patient to the Government Hospital). I will be able to help many starving people who cannot buy rice from the black market and who are lingering on between life and death. In America you cannot have any idea of the misery here; it has not rained for six months and there is not a blade of green grass; vegetables are unobtainable and milk not to be had even for dying babies. . . . Some babies never have any other milk but their mothers', who exhaust themselves breast-feeding the babies until they are 4 or 5 years of age while they themselves have to do heavy work. . . . . If the letter you published brings more help, many will be saved."

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The Screen

DELECTABLE BUNDLES FROM BRITAIN

THAT THE English movie from Jacques Offenbach's *"Tales of Hoffmann"* is something of a visual and auditory treat should come as no surprise to moviegoers already familiar with the work of the famous producer-director-writer team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Their earlier films (like the extraordinarily handsome "Black Narcissus," or "The Red Shoes," which through its fanciful imagery won large American audiences to ballet, or such brilliant little gems as "I Know Where I'm Going" and "Edge of the World") gave us every right to expect something special in their latest picture. "Hoffmann" is no disappointment. Photographed in exceptionally lovely Technicolor, it is one of the most luxuriously beautiful films I've seen; and the singing throughout is fine. Your enjoyment of this movie, however, depends to a great extent on how much you can take opera. For all its beauty, this is still opera; and many a callous-hardened audience may grow impatient long before the love-sick Hoffman polishes off his third tale, the Antonia episode, which is the most impressive to hear but the least cinematic to see.

Actually "Tales of Hoffmann" is as good a choice for a mid-twentieth century movie venture as any opera could be. On the whole its story lends itself to cinematic technique and furthermore it is so full of psychological symbols that even the moderns can't look down their Freudian noses at it. In fact it would be fun to turn the psychiatric boys loose on this plot about the poet who is so madly in love with Stella that, when he thinks he's lost her, he sublimates his emotions by turning to drink and reciting three tales of former loves. In the first, Hoffmann falls in love with a mechanical doll who comes to life long enough to arouse his passions and lead him on a merry dance. In the second story the wandering poet now more blasé in lush Venice, falls for a courtesan who is trying to capture his reflection as well as his soul. Although much wiser by the time of the third tale, Hoffmann becomes enamored with a consumptive singer who sings away her life. Analysts will note with interest that Hoffmann loses all three of these dames, and when the real Stella, who is the embodiment of the others, comes to the tap room for him, Hoffmann is too far gone in drink and poetry to join her and face reality. So she goes out on the town with Lindorf, the evil genius who also managed to wreck the three other romances.

Giving credit where it properly belongs is unusually complicated because the actors and dancers we see in most of the roles are not ones we hear. Lovely ballerinas Moira Shearer (who doubles as Stella and the mechanical doll) and Ludmilla Tcherina, Robert Helpmann (who works overtime as Lindorf and the three villains of the tales), Leonide Massine, Frederick Ashton (who also did the choreography) provide a pleasing eyeful with their dancing, posing and acting—but another cast provide the voices we hear. Robert Rounseville, who sings and acts Hoffmann throughout, and Ann Ayars, who does her own singing as the consumptive Antonia, are exceedingly effective. The Offenbach score is conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. No doubt all of these artists as well as Powell and Pressburger and their large staff deserve applause for their work on this stunning film. I wished several times that they hadn't treated the original so reverently. But for its moments of great beauty, "Tales of Hoffmann" is a movie definitely not to be missed—even by moviegoers whose interest in this opera has never extended beyond the Barcarolle.

★

IF YOU prefer your English movies, however, to move at a faster pace, you are certain to find *"Odette"* right up your alley. This is a cloak-and-dagger picture that has the added advantage of being based on fact. And what's more, producer-director Herbert Wilcox has handled the thrilling story in such a manner that none of its suspenseful episodes detract from its documentary atmosphere. Anna Neagle turns in a moving and sincere performance in the title role, a British secret service agent who worked with the French underground in World War II. Even more exciting than the scenes showing her stealing the Marseilles dockyard plans from the Nazis are the later episodes built around her capture by the Germans and her life as a prisoner—under Gestapo tortures and in the Ravensbruck concentration camp.

The good performances by Miss Neagle and the fine cast surrounding her (Trevor Howard as Peter Churchill, Marius Goring as the head of German Intelligence, Peter Ustinov as another British agent, and many others as English, French and Germans) as well as the excellent on-the-spot photography help to put over the fine spirit of this movie which is actually a tribute to all the brave men and women who faced adversity during the war and whose courage and strong belief in their cause gave them strength to meet extreme hardship. That Odette did not crack up under torture is amazing; and it is fitting that such a good film should celebrate the virtues of such an outstanding person. The film's weaknesses are few—mainly in the editing and in the confusion of names; but its assets are many. "Odette" should win new applause for the British as fighters and as film makers.

★

THAT NOT all English films merit the same praise is obvious. Another imported item, called *"Circle of Danger"* tells the story of an American (played by Ray Milland) who goes to Great Britain to trace the strange elements connected with the story of his brother's death as a Commando during the war. The clues lead this man to Wales, England and Scotland—and while the scenery is at times very pleasant, the plot is revealed so amateurishly under Jacques Tourneur's direction that we could hardly sit it out. Ray falls in love with an attractive Scots girl (Patricia Roc) but their on-again-off-again romance gets in the way of Ray's sleuthing and doesn't do much to hold our interest in the lukewarm narrative.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Monk and Hunters

By THOMAS MERTON

THIS IS the way a year ends: with an examination of conscience.

We are permitted to meditate at a distance from the monastery building, but within the enclosure. It is New Year's Eve. I meditate. I am next to the ruins of an old horse barn which the founders of the monastery built with great labor one hundred years ago and which we will presently pull down in one day with an atrocious machine. It is silent here. And I sit on a pile of rotten lumber looking at the cedars and the iron grey sky and the bleak pasture inside the enclosure wall, where the mules go starve on Sundays when they play.

There are some hunters in the outside orchard. I see them enter the woods. Two of them: white pants and brown pants. They are not very serious hunters because they talk very loudly, all the time. Their talking echoes through the wood. Their dog is far ahead of them, barking and barking. Soon they just stop dead in the middle of the wood and talk. But the dog becomes furiously active, ranging from one end of the wood to the other, barking even more loudly than before. It is quite obvious that the hunt is a lie. The dog is after nothing. Neither are the hunters.

Suddenly, the one with white pants climbs up on the enclosure wall. He stands on top of it, with his gun in his hand. It is all an act. "Here I am standing on the wall. I am prepared to shoot all the rabbits as they go by. My dog will rout them out and they will all file past this particular point in an orderly procession. From this well chosen position I will shoot them down one after the other, and will return home staggering under a load of game, and justifiably proud of my success."

The whole universe knows, of course, that if he ever fired that gun he would fall off the wall backwards, inside the enclosure, and would then become a monk.

Meanwhile I am in an equivocal position. The hunters have not looked up the hill and scrutinized me, but they know I am here. I know that this implies some obligation on my part to act as if I know that they know that I am watching them.

Man is a social animal. What am I supposed to do about it? Will they feel offended if I ignore all social conventions and express no resentment at the presence of one of them on our enclosure wall? An enclosure wall, after all, is a monument to a most sacrosanct legal fiction. There is not only the question of property

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THOMAS MERTON (Father M. Louis, O.C.S.O.) is the author of The Seven Storey Mountain and The Waters of Siloe.

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but the question of cloister. Will white pants be disappointed if I do not somehow indicate that I think he might be sinning against both justice and religion? Am I betraying my monastic community and civil society and the Church itself by not standing up and uttering wild, inarticulate noises in my throat and indicating, by violent gestures, that white pants should get down off the enclosure wall, on the outside, and stay there? After all, I am a Trappist. For all he knows, I have a "vow of silence." I must not talk, still less cry out. But the fact that I am (in the eyes of those who know nothing about it) "vowed" to silence means by implication that I am also somehow bound to defend all the other rigid social obligations in the universe—property, enclosure walls, and every form of self-restraint.

★

THERE he stands on the wall, the hunter, the libertine. Here I sit by the ruins of the horse-barn, in our cowl, our long sleeves, our pointed hood, holding a religious book. I am the intransigent guardian of every moral prohibition that was ever formulated. . . .

But we come to an understanding on two levels.

First: I live up to my obligations as a social animal. I make no sign, no gesture. I simply allow him to gather, from my immobility, that I am legally invisible. Yet I also permit him to deduce, from the fact that I look in his direction, that I entertain toward him and the world he represents an abstract, sorrowful, disembodied and somewhat official good will. So there we stay. He stands on top of the wall, "hunting" and I sit on a board, "meditating." I have a book with me. He has a gun. Both are factors in a disguise. This brings me to the second level on which we come to an agreement.

The second level is the level of connivance. It is the mutual recognition—explicit only on my part, perhaps—that I do not have the remotest idea who he is and he does not have the remotest idea who I am and that perhaps *he* does not know who he is and quite probably I do not know who I am. It is a recognition that in fact the whole world is suffering from amnesia and that nobody knows who anybody is and that all our false identities, which we have made up for ourselves, have ceased to matter and only serve one purpose: to get us into trouble. And that the best thing for all of us to do is to vanish and try, each one as honestly and sincerely as he can, to discover himself on some other, more vital, more unofficial level: the level of real, not legal, solitude, and the level of real, not legal contemplation. Or the level of real, not legal civility, and the level of real activity and not only of charades.

After that we will be able to get together, not in the tangle of artificial relations in which we all eventually strangle, but in the vital communication which is very simple because it is charity. God is charity.

★

SOON THEIR DOG comes inside the enclosure. It is very simple for him to get in. He wriggles through a hole under the wall. And he rushes up and down the pasture, quite aimlessly of course, barking and wagging his tail with mongrel optimism. At this, three colts which have been out of sight all this time, perform the duty which I have failed to observe. They canter down the pasture to where the dog is, not in protest, not in judgment, but simply as an expression of instinct.

Immediately white pants knows what to do. He stands up on the wall and says, tersely, to his companion in the woods outside: "Call the dog." This, of course, clearly indicates that there has been no understanding between us at all. The fact that the colts have come down the pasture to investigate a strange dog means that the enclosure wall, is, in fact, an enclosure wall, that property is property, laws are laws, "vows of silence" are "vows of silence" and thus the hunters have deduced, quite wrongly, that if I have remained silent it is because of a vow. They are comforted to think that the "vow" has taken precedence over my injured property rights as a representative member of a monastic corporation. This, then, establishes quite definitely that the presence of white pants on the enclosure wall *matters.* Whereas I, to my shame, have been acting as if it did not matter at all.

Thus the hunter on the wall picks himself up stiffly. He turns eastward, with the gun in his hand, and walks along the top of the wall, sure of his steps, sure of his position in the universal order of things, sure that he is a hunter after all.

And that leaves me in the presence of an immense difficulty—the task of asking myself if I am a monk in the same way as he is a hunter, and if so, if this should be a cause for alarm.

Of Note

"Fanaticism"

THE April issue of *Blackfriars,* edited by the English Dominicans (St. Giles, Oxford), carries in the April issue an article called "Name and Number," signed by The Editor.

> The record of one former Communist's disillusionment has recently appeared, and the importance of Mr. Douglas Hyde's *I Believed* lies deeper than in its account of the party's methods of work or in its estimate of English Communist leaders. For Mr. Hyde is more than a Marxist who has seen the fallacy of a sytem. For him, as for many others, the god of dialectical materialism has indeed failed, but the vacuum of a faith that has been lost has been filled by a faith even more compelling than that which he has abandoned. And nothing is more remarkable in his book than his insistence on an understanding of the degree and quality of the Communist's faith, and the corollary that a Christian alternative must—as indeed it should—demand a faith and fervor yet more imperative. "I know that the majority [of Communists] would make magnificent Christians if once they were given a

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better cause in which to believe. And I am certain that millions more could be prevented from ever joining the Communists' ranks if they were made more aware of something superior, something able to make even greater demands upon them, claiming the whole man and using him for noble instead of ignoble ends."

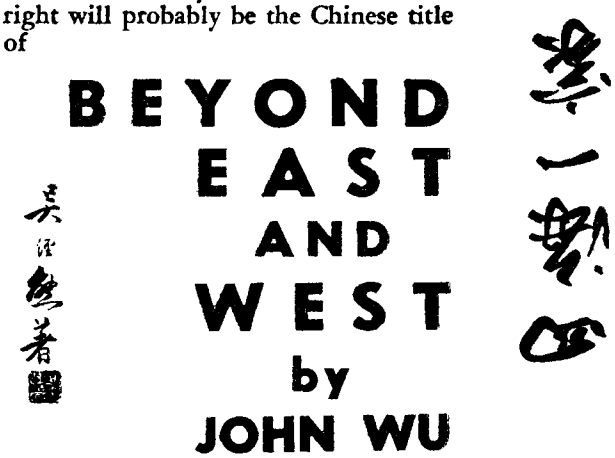
It is not through minimizing the radical demands of Christian faith that its enemies will be converted. The Christian's concern for social justice must be more, not less, absolute than that of the Communist: his zeal in implementing the doctrine that he holds must extend to all the occasions of life, so that they become, and the whole meaning of the Incarnation is to make it possible for them to become, the occasions of grace. And a negative and querulous attack on Communism which fails to see that it is the fruit of unbelief, the inevitable consequence of what Mr. Hyde rightly calls "the spiritual vacuum which exists all over what once was Christendom," can do nothing to remove its power to inspire those who have found a faith in the rejection of Christian faith. . . .

In Italy one is told that young men will frequently not commit themselves to 'Catholic Action'; they believe, but might agree with the mythical taxi-driver in Naples who, when asked by an English visitor if he were a Catholic said, "Of course," and when further asked if he went to Mass, replied: "Well, no. I'm a Catholic but not a fanatic." There is a sense in which the 'fanaticism' of Catholics can be the only alternative to the undoubted fanaticism of the unbelievers. The fear to be involved, the instinct that passively and good-naturedly accepts a traditional piety, the failure to see that a faith that has nothing to say of the evils of mass employment, malnutrition, bad housing: these are not the alternatives to the faith of materialist unbelief. . . .

In two neighboring towns in Italy the Fascists had built party headquarters in that bombastic and empty style which symbolized the movement itself. Each building had a tower, on which mammoth bronze *fasces* had been placed. Today, in one town (which has a Communist Council) the hammer-and-sickle adorns the tower instead. In the other (which is not Communist) the tower has an immense scarlet advertisement for Coca-Cola. It would be absurd to pursue the analogy too far, but until the alternative to the hammer-and-sickle is seen to be a cross, and until allegiance of the cross is seen to be the heroic and sacrificial life it is, Communism, the ape of Christianity, will never lack apostles, generous men as they often are, deluded, in the dark. It is the privilege of the "children of light" to pray that the light of grace may fall on their brethren everywhere. And it is the fullness of faith, flowing out into the works that are Christ's, that will, under God, achieve a world's redemption.

IF YOU READ CHINESE

note that that mysterious affair on the right will probably be the Chinese title of



and on the left you see his signature.

Dr. Wu has got an astonishing amount into his first half-century. At fifty years old, he is one of China's leading lawyers, has been President of the International Court at Shanghai, was the principal author of the new Chinese Constitution of the mid-thirties, went to the Vatican as Ambassador from Nationalist China, is married and has thirteen children. (You will see the whole family with the Holy Father in one of the illustrations in the book). He was a close friend of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, with whom he carried on a lengthy and affectionate correspondence. Ten years ago, he came into the Church, losing nothing, he says, that Confucius or Lao Tse had given him, but only gaining new treasures. In this age of rather dim personalities it is almost frightening to meet anyone intensely alive. so completely Catholic, so much himself.

This is what Jacques Maritain says of Dr. Wu and his book:

"Mr. John Wu is an accomplished example of a Chinese and a Christian. It was a privilege for me to enter into friendly relations with him in Rome, where both of us were Ambassadors more fond of philosophy than of diplomacy. He planned to translate St. Thomas Aquinas into Chinese, and he was perfectly qualified for such a task. Everybody admired in him a rare combination of human and spiritual virtues, fervent faith, freshness of heart, refined simplicity, piety, courtesy, profound scholarship and true love of wisdom. The same qualities appear in his book, which is a noble testimony to the humanism of old Chinese culture and to the eternal truth of the Gospel."

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Books

The Loved And The Lost. Morley Callaghan. Macmillan. $3.

THEY DON'T mention him very much when they talk about Catholic literary revivals any more. But he's still going, he's still first-rate, better than many they do mention in the Bishop's Lounge where the tea is given, or in the hushed lecture hall where the sententious discourses are offered to the votaries of the literary ghetto.

Don't know whether or not Morley Callaghan likes the smell of revival incense but it looks like he's eligible for it again. In *The Loved And the Lost,* his first novel in twelve years, he's still a big leaguer, he's Joltin' Joe DiMaggio, coming back in mid-September to belt the ball out of the park with three men on.

Some of us have thought that the modern American interracial novel of distinction might be written about Friendship House, with maybe a robust, noisily eloquent lady stamping through its pages, charming dowagers out of old clothes and old prejudices. Yet, until a better one comes along, this reviewer thinks Mr. Callaghan has done it. And he has done it in a way of literary genius, rather than in the legitimate manner of the reportorial novelist who has to hang around the movements and get things first-hand.

In pretty, petite, imprudent Peggy Sanderson of Montreal, we meet, know and wonder about a natural saint who looks like a strumpet to both Negroes and whites. Jim McAlpine, urbane professor turned liberal columnist, believes he sees the saint shining through the cerements of the sinner and is driven to love either. Peggy, courageously sympathetic to Negroes since little girlhood, sees the Negroes' need for the love and understanding of the whites. So, night after night, she sits in front of a drink at a sepia honky-tonk, making honestly friendly with the boys in the band and just being around colored folk, with open-hearted good will. The door of her furnished room is often ajar and her colored friends come and go, loved with the spirit rather than the body.

But what are her white brethren saying in the sophisticated bistros of Montreal and what are the Negro bandsmen and their wives saying about her and each other? Their thought, their speech gathers the dry, sharp sticks of jealousy, suspicion and hatred which can only end in the sacrificial holocaust of an innocent victim.

"That was the sin," says Jim McAlpine later, "I couldn't accept her as she was." And with greater guilt than McAlpine's, that is the sin, too, of the interracially tense in this work—they could no longer believe in innocence, hers or each other's.

Mr. Callaghan definitely does not hit you over the head with a thesis. His method, as always, is artistic indirection—the story clearly grips you and the meaning is an intriguing afterthought. The race-riot in the honky-tonk, incited by goodness, however imprudent, rather than evil, the brutal rape and murder of Peggy, leave you terror-stricken.

ONE can say all the nice things about Callaghan as a writer—his skill at making a professional hockey game din in your ears, at exposing the charming fraudulence of a big-time liberal newspaper publisher, at evoking the snowfall mysticism of a lovely old French-Canadian city. His touch for people, detail and mood is sure and evocative, as before.

If art can achieve preachment, however indirectly, perhaps Mr. Callaghan has done so in this arresting new novel. To those who say that the Negro problem is a "white problem" *The Loved And The Lost* might suggest the more profound truth of mutual responsibility of the races, as human personalities, now and always.

JOE DEVER.

The Great Idea. Henry Hazlitt. Appleton-Century-Crofts. $3.50

IF YOU were to versify an advertisement for the new drug against B.O., you would not have written a poem. Similarly if you were to fictionalize a discussion on economic questions, you would not necessarily have created a novel. That there is confusion about these matters is characteristic of a time when values are twisted, when slight books can be compared with the great works of literature. While the works of Balzac and Dostoievsky appear in a lurid make-up to appeal to the appetite of the masses, Hazlitt's book is called on the jacket "a novel in the great tradition."

Arthur Koestler, in writing *The Age of Longing,* had the serious intention of creating an epic of the two worlds. He succeeded at least partly by inventing some characters that have a life of their own and some situations that are well observed and skillfully described. Mr. Hazlitt, however, has simply thought up a very meager plot and invented names for some figures that are lifeless, just partners in a very sophomoric economic dialogue. He emphasizes the merits of the "great idea," which is nothing but a completely rationalistic concept of capitalist competition, popularized from the somewhat subtle books of Hayek and Mises, the most outspoken defenders of the benefits of capitalism.

More than two-thirds of the words in this alleged novel are devoted to abstract economic problems, as you might have expected from the author of the well-informed column "Business Tides" in *Newsweek.* Nevertheless I would not vouch for the fact that even all the statements on economics are correct. The author claims that to Marx, capital consists of "all the produced means of production" and that, for instance, "cigarette packages are capital." When I was reading Marx, it struck me that to him capital is not certain kinds of material objects, but a specific sociological power-relation. Capital is the power of men who own the means of production to buy at a relatively cheap price the labor of

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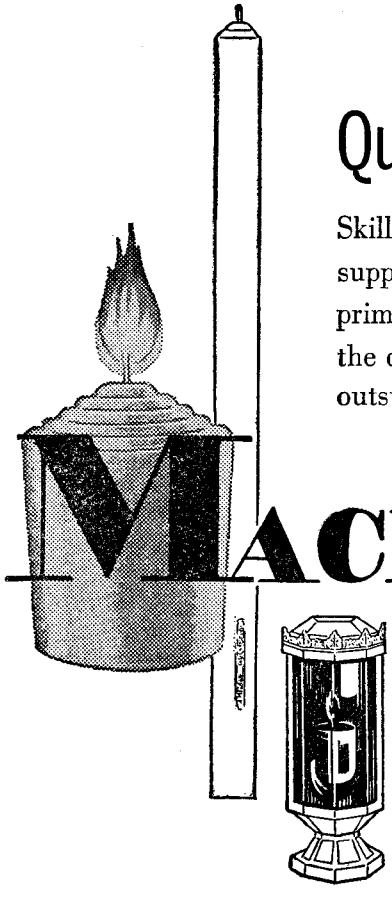
men who lack the means of production. Marx, I think, would never agree that cigarette packages are capital in themselves and would deny passionately that they can be capital in a world without private business. There are more of such problems on which one might enlarge—if this were a serious treatise and not just a hybrid between fiction and economic ramblings.

Hazlitt's story is laid in the year of Our Marx 282, which is the year 2100 A.D. Of course, such a utopian novel brings to mind Bellamy's famous *Looking Backward,* an imaginative work, not very favorable to the judgment of his successor in this line. When Bellamy wrote his novel in the 1880's he at least developed a vision of future technical inventions and of the human reactions caused by them. Mr. Hazlitt just tells us that Moscow is the capital of the world-dominating Communist state Wonworld and that even the faintest traces of capitalist civilization have been erased. In spite of these statements, man has not changed the least bit. The people in this novel speak as they do in our happy pre-regimentation days, not as human beings alerted by one-and-a-half centuries of life without freedom. (I am sure that such a situation would produce catacombs of religious intensity.)

The hero of Hazlitt's story, Peter, the son of Stalinin, dictator of Wonworld, grew up under his mother's care on a small island, happily isolated from Communist indoctrination. When the sensitive youth was belatedly prepared to represent his sick father, the brutal methods of the Communist regime horrified him. But being an inborn genius, it dawned on Peter that the poverty of Communist mankind was caused by its faulty economic system. In discussions with a comrade of American descent who worked in the Politbureau, he discovered a new way of prosperity which resembles strangely the apologetics of free capitalist competition as found in the works of Czech and Hungarian emigré professors of the 1930's. Their doctrines, which were of little use in solving the difficulties of their time, prove in this story to be the ideal sesame to free America, at least, from Communism and to open ways of prosperity and happiness for all.

As you can see, *The Great Idea* is just a piece of capitalist propaganda which the author hopes to make more glamorous by using some fictional accessories. The world of the soul seems negligible to him, even the irrational forces of political passion; everything depends on the right economic key. In this respect Mr. Hazlitt is as crudely materialistic as Messrs. Marx and Stalin. But he is not always completely consistent. He admits occasionally that a high level of competition depends "on a high general level of morality" and has to be accompanied by "a system of legal restraints."

But the ideological emptiness of the book prevents an understanding of the sources of this morality and the motives for these legal restrictions. They are of course, not to be found in a materialistic world view



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and a theory of material prosperity, but only from a religious and moral understanding of the dignity and responsibility of man.

MAX FISCHER.

Dream and Reality. An Essay in Autobiography. Nicolas Berdyaev. Macmillan. $4.50.

IN THE United States, Berdyaev is well known as a religious philosopher. However, Berdyaev the man is almost unknown in America since he never came to this country. In spite of several studies devoted to him in English, this remarkable personality still awaits an expert biographer. Here we have Berdyaev's life story by himself. This is a posthumous work, first published in Russian, and now excellently translated into English by Katherine Lampert.

Berdyaev, who wrote this book during the last years preceding his death (partly under the German occupation of France and partly after the liberation) referred to it as to a "philosophical autobiography." In his preface, he says that this work "is not tied to any systematic plan. It contains reminiscences, but they are not what is of most importance in it. Memories of events and people alternate with reflections, and the reflections are of more consequence."

To say, however, that Berdyaev was merely concerned with "problems," instead of the "events" of his time, would not be exactly true. He was undoubtedly a transcendent thinker, with no inclination whatever toward so-called pragmatism. But he was not an abstract thinker. His very mode of thought as well as his religious experience were closely linked with *existence*. He might be called an existentialist before existentialism. Actually, of course, he belonged to no school, not even to that of Russian religious thought which preceded him. He absorbed, as he tells us in his autobiography, the fundamental trends of this school: the Slavophiles, and Dostoievsky, Vladimir Solovyev and Tolstoy. They were all his masters. But there is in Berdyaev something typically his own—the fruit of fervent quest, of struggle, especially of solitude, and this is reflected in his autobiography.

The author of *Dream and Reality* often stressed the fact that we live in a present related not only to the past, but also to the future. It is with this in mind that *Dream and Reality* should be read. We learn from this book a great deal about Berdyaev's past, about his childhood and youth. But this early period is already illumined with the light of Berdyaev's future destiny: that of a mature religious thinker—the prophet of the New Middle Ages.

To quote once more from his own preface (perhaps the most brilliant pages of this work) Berdyaev lived in a "catastrophic age." He witnessed three wars and two revolutions. He was imprisoned four times (twice by the Czarist regime and twice by the Bolsheviks). More than once his personal freedom and his creative freedom were threatened, and he was finally banished from his country by the Soviet Government.

Dream and Reality tells us about these dramatic and turbulent years. But there is very little self-pity.

From his mother, Berdyaev inherited a certain vivacity, the capacity for quick response and ideological fencing. He also received from her, as he tells us, a direct understanding of the Catholic soul and spirit. In spite of the fact that he was to remain to the end of his life a confirmed Russian-Orthodox, there was something in Catholicism which was deeply familiar to him. He tells us that upon entering a Catholic Church, he always felt at home, with the mysterious awareness of having experienced all this before.

THERE are some very interesting chapters about Russian Marxism (of the pre-Lenin brand, since Lenin in those days was as yet inactive, exiled and still almost unknown). But the Russian Marxist or Social Democrat movement was already strong, under the leadership of Plekhanov. Berdyaev joined this movement during his student years in Kiev. He was arrested and exiled to Vologda in the North of Russia. It was during those months spent in the

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dismal Vologda setting that Berdyaev realized that he was no longer in tune with the Marxists. He strongly felt that Marxism was a system of political and ideological tyranny. Marxism also meant the rejection of absolute moral values.

On these two points and especially, no doubt, on the latter one—the negation of an ethical basis of man's development—Berdyaev completely differed with the other exiles. When he was finally released his break with the Marxists was complete. Neither was he satisfied with the "God of the philosophers." First in Petrograd, and later in Moscow, he joined a group of intellectuals, filled with a new spirit of Russian Orthodoxy: this meant a struggle against the reactionary Czarist, ecclesiastical hierarchy, and at the same time the acceptance of the pure Russian ascetic and mystic tradition. Berdyaev's account in *Dream and Reality* of his own religious experience at that time is extremely interesting and moving. The more so, because he tells his story in reserved and sober tones. A few years later, Berdyaev was banished by the Bolsheviks from Soviet Russia.

When he was in exile for more than two decades in France, Berdyaev was the center of a Russian religious and social revival. He was in contact with French and English intellectuals, with Jacques Maritain and the Catholics, as well as with representatives of Protestant and Anglican circles. Even those who disagreed with some of the points of his religious doctrine could not but respect and admire his dedicated life, and his deep sense of man's unique and inimitable dignity. In his autobiography, Berdyaev speaks a great deal about these various contacts with contemporary thinkers and religious leaders. He tells us also something quite important about himself, scrutinizing his soul in complete sincerity.

One thing however, he does not speak about, due to his noble reserve and modesty: he says nothing of his heroic virtues, of his ardent self-sacrifice and completely disinterested service to truth and justice and freedom. Though in *Dream and Reality* he describes himself rather sarcastically as an "egocentric," Berdyaev was least of all an egoist. His entire being was devoted to what he so eloquently describes as "those other worlds." But Berdyaev was always afraid of over-statements, and this particularly about himself.

HELENE ISWOLSKY.

They Lived The Faith. Thomas P. Neill. Bruce. $4.

THE IDEA of this book is excellent. By way of balance to the ordinary writing of ecclesiastical history, with its emphasis upon the role played by the clergy and its neglect of what laymen have done, Mr. Neill has told the story of twelve laymen and of one woman, Pauline Jaricot, the foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Furthermore, the arrangement is good, four of his subjects being grouped

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under the heading of "Political Adjustment," three under "Social Adjustment" and six under "Intellectual Action." One wonders why G. K. Chesterton does not appear instead of Wilfrid Ward, valuable though his services were, unless it be because of a prejudice—which may also have excluded so much as a mention of Belloc, while Arnold Lunn and Bruce Marshall are listed among the figures of what he calls the Catholic Literary Revival. Sigrid Undset, in my opinion our one unquestionably great Catholic novelist, is similarly ignored. However, Mr. Neill has given an informative account of those whose biographies he has written. To each he has appended an annotated bibliography which, while confessedly incomplete, draws upon some of the more important periodical literature written about his subject.

So far as I can judge, the research has been extensive and the mistakes are not many. But according to Seán O'Faoláin's life of Daniel O'Connell, *The King of the Beggars,* in the trial of his client, John Magee, for libel, a fine of £500 was imposed along with a two-year jail sentence, not one year or a fine of "about $5,000." And I wonder if Brownson could, in his day, have found anything like our corner drugstore in which to argue with all comers. And if Mr. Neill shows little sparkle or warmth of humor, God does not endow everybody with these qualities. His style is no more commonplace than that of the majority of professors. But a professor of history should have been *au courant* enough with the anti-Catholic controversial manners of a hundred years ago to be aware that they were not so dainty as ever to soften to the "Scarlet Lady" the abominable "Whore of Babylon." One is reminded of the way some people talk about the woman who lives next door employing a char-lady. In short, impressive (perhaps over-impressive) as is Mr. Neill's learning, his general culture strikes me as somewhat deficient.

But lest I seem to be disparaging, I express the view that, though the chapters vary somewhat in weight, taken as a whole *They Lived The Faith* is the best book of its kind that has so far appeared. If "Orestes Brownson" shows slight understanding of Brownson's thought, and no deep reading in the voluminous works of that master, the author on the other hand, seems to me to have done well with Windthorst and Garciá Moreno and Joseph Görres and Donoso Cortés, though this may be because I do not know very much about them myself. But whatever strictures have to be made, Mr. Neill must be admitted to have given us an able performance and an additional encouragement to Catholic Action.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

Each Man's Son. Hugh MacLennan. Little Brown. $3.

THE INCUBUS of a Calvinistic conscience, the drear dead weight on one's soul that comes from seeing God as harsh Judge and Avenger rather than as Savior, this is the theme of Hugh MacLennan's latest and best novel. The scene of the story is Cape Breton, that rugged and lovely island that lies just north of the mainland of Nova Scotia. The people are the Gaelic Highlanders who brought to those parts all their sensitivity, their emotionalism, and their conviction of predestination. Their work is coal-mining, their recreation drunkenness and fighting, their spirit poetry, and their fear damnation. The time of the story is 1913, when the world was still at peace and Cape Breton was still isolated.

Born and brought up in Nova Scotia, Mr. MacLennan knows what he is writing about. Countryside and people are alike familiar to him. His sensitive insight and his evocative powers are here shown fully developed. Readers of his previous novel, *The Precipice* will remember how well he captured and depicted the spirit of puritanism in a small Canadian town as contrasted with metropolitan American life. The warp of the previous book has become the whole fabric of the latter. This novel is all one piece; there are in it neither "Two Solitudes," nor two worlds. The result is a gain in dramatic intensity and in technical mastery. With this, his fourth novel, Canada's leading English-speaking writer consolidates his claim to preeminence.

The error of puritanism is far older than Calvin. The Manichees long before his time concluded that matter was essentially evil. The Jansenists after his time tended toward the same mistake. Although we may have been held by Revelation from the damnable error of denying free will, yet through individual frailty we have some knowledge of what it means to sin against hope and to be ridden by guilt, despite our Redemption.

If I have any criticism of this admirable book, it is that the author might perhaps have shown more explicitly this extra dimension of the problem. Guilt feelings may be seen at their worst among the Presbyterian Gaels of Cape Breton, but the trouble is not local. Guilt is a recurrent symptom of mankind, and despair a common sin. Psychiatry can describe the mechanisms of both, but it necessarily fails to reach their origin. Man is fallen, that we all know in our bones. What is less well understood is that man has been redeemed.

MURRAY BALLANTYNE.

• REVIEWERS •

JOE DEVER is a novelist and short-story writer.

MAX FISCHER, who has been a foreign correspondent all over the world for German publications, is now teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York.

HELENE ISWOLSKY was closely associated with Nicolas Berdyaev in the decade before World War II. She is now a member of the Fordham faculty.

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A Point of View V

The Work of Art

THE true artist, the maker, is called to help restore the fallen world, the stolen world; to restore man's dominion over matter, granted first to Adam who called the beasts by their name and they obeyed him, the dominion given man for God's sake and appropriated by Satan for his own purposes.

Thus the Church and the artist have a single aim: to glorify God by giving Him back the praise of his creation. And the artist is actively engaged, as should also be those who behold his work, in the religious use of matter. He is not to tie himself and his spectators to so much matter for self-indulgence (to be dizzied, dazzled and bewitched), rather both are to be elevated into conscious divine praise by what is done and seen. This is holy work, holy in its doing and in its effects. . . .

Our use of matter is an index of our Catholicism. The artist, aware of the sacramentality of the universe and of life, can become the apostle of the age that needs him.

There are those who like to believe that all art must preach some explicit message, thrust forward some pious sentiment, illustrate a text. This is the manner of both the apple-blossom Madonna and the ads for perfume and nail lacquer. But art speaks in symbol, uses symbol to make us aware of reality, not of illusion: it draws aside the veil. I can be as aware of God, of the holiness of His work, before a still life as before a crucifix. Perhaps more so.

DAVID ROSS KING in The Commonweal, April 11, 1947.

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